

VZCZCXRO2947
RR RUEHAG RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHBS #1864 3451624
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 101624Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8335
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 001864

SIPDIS

STATE PASS WHA/CCA DAVID MCFARLAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2009
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: BELGIUM:COUNTRY BY COUNTRY REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION
OF TITLE III OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: SECSTATE 126578

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Robert Kiene

11. (C) Belgium maintains diplomatic relations with Cuba through its Embassy in Havana and the Cuban Embassy in Brussels. FM De Gucht has not considered Cuba a priority during his ministry. No high level visits have taken place since Louis Michel was Foreign Minister from 1999-2003. Belgium has respected and followed the EU position of maintaining measures against Cuba that ban such high level visits since they were adopted in 2003. Human rights and democracy are important to Belgium worldwide, including in its relationship with Cuba.

12. (C) Cuba is not one of Belgium's twenty-four priority countries for foreign assistance. However, Belgian does contribute to basic development projects in Cuba indirectly through organizations such as the UNDP and UN Habitat. There was a slight increase in the amount of aid provided to these organizations after the two recent hurricanes in Cuba, but no aid was given directly.

13. (C) Cuba is not a major destination for Belgian foreign investment. The only investor of note is the Belgian - Brazilian brewing conglomerate InBev which has taken an interest in a Cuban brewing concern. Exports to Cuba totaled approximately EUR 40 million and imports from Cuba approach EUR 4 million in 2007. Around three thousand Belgian tourists visit Cuba annually.

FOX

.